

Language Arts: 8th Grade
St. Wendelin High School and Jr. High
2009-2010

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Syllabus:

Eighth grade Language Arts/Literature Strategies block is a study of grammar, composition, vocabulary, novels, and research skills. Students will use knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, and evaluation as they explore their language through reading, speaking, listening, and writing. Goals, objectives, and activities follow Diocesan curriculum and are aligned with eighth grade state curriculum standards. Students will study one novel each quarter as a class. Also, students will be required to read novels outside of class for assigned projects/presentations. They will complete a variety of writing assignments including oral presentations, the examination of grammar usage in different formats, studying spelling words, and working with vocabulary through lists and in the literary context of literature we read.

Course Objectives:

Literature

1. to identify universal themes in the assigned literature and to relate these to personal experiences
2. to recognize major literary forms and techniques
3. to identify the characteristics that distinguish literary forms and techniques
4. to examine a literary selection from several critical perspectives
5. to explore the genres of fiction, nonfiction, poetry, and drama

Writing

1. to write using the structures, principles or rules of grammar, mechanics, punctuation, and diction covered in class
2. to outline, draft, write, and revise essays demonstrating the ability to:
 - create effective thesis statements
 - express ideas by using various methods of development
 - write for various audiences
 - produce effective essays under time constraints

Speaking/Research

1. to use verbal and nonverbal presentation skills to deliver formal oral presentation
2. to select major points from written research, prioritize pertinent information, and present literary findings
3. to establish criteria for self- and peer-evaluation of spoken text
4. to analyze and synthesize information from a variety of sources to produce research reports
5. to cite, through MLA documentation, sources used in the research project
6. to define the meaning and consequences of plagiarism

7. to distinguish one's own ideas from information created or discovered by others

Grammar, Spelling, and Vocabulary

1. to define words through context clues, use of roots, or resources
2. to analyze sentences to build comprehension and grammar skills
3. to use correct spelling, capitalizations and punctuation
4. to identify all eight parts of speech
5. to identify phrases and clauses
6. to use verb tenses and forms appropriately
7. to use subject-verb agreement
8. to use pronouns correctly

English Language Arts Standards/Objectives:

Class Policies and Procedures:

Attendance and Make-up Work: Students are urged to keep absences to a minimum. They are responsible for work missed and should be ready with the appropriate assignment on the day they return. All make-up work must be completed after returning to school. Failure to do so will result in a grade of "0" on the assignment. Students will receive no credit for papers submitted without a name or for assignments left at home, in their lockers, or elsewhere.

Materials Needed in Class Daily: a 3-ring notebook, loose leaf wide ruled notebook paper, pencil, blue or black ball-point pen, a red pen, and the assigned text(s), and a "Keep" folder

Classroom Rules:

1. BE POLITE.
 - Be in your seat before the bell rings.
2. BE PREPARED.
 - Have your materials every day.
3. BE POLITE.
 - Respect other people and their belongings.
 - Respect your teacher.
 - Respect yourself.

Plagiarism and Cheating: Any plagiarism or cheating earns the involved parties a grade of "0" for the assignment.

Receiving credit for assignments: Your work must be completed and turned in on time in order for you to receive credit. Homework is due at the beginning of class. Late homework has 25% deducted daily

Grading Distribution: Major tests, essays, projects + Quizzes + Homework + class participation = 100%

Grading Scale: A = 93-100, B = 85-92, C = 77-84, D = 70-76, F = 69 or below

Tentative Course Outline:

First Nine Weeks

Daily Oral Language, Stems, and Journal Writing

Unit 1: Fiction and Nonfiction

Reading Skills Addressed: Analyzing the genre

Comparing and contrasting

Making predictions

Ongoing Grammar Study: Nouns

Writing Portfolio: Description of a person

Autobiographical essay

Novel: *The Outsiders* by S.E. Hinton

Second Nine Weeks

Daily Oral Language, Stems, and Journal Writing

Unit 2: Short Stories

Reading Skills Addressed: Analyzing the genre

Evaluating character and setting

Ongoing Grammar Study: Pronouns

Writing Portfolio: Short Story

Unit 3: Types of Nonfiction

Reading Skills Addressed: Evaluating articles and essays

Analyzing current topics and issues

Relating to the lives of others

Examining the author's tone, voice, and organization

Writing Portfolio: Persuasive Essay

Novel: *The Pigman* by Paul Zindel

Third Nine Weeks

Daily Oral Language, Stems, and Journal Writing

Unit 4: Poetry

Reading Skills Addressed: Surveying the work of various poets

Analyzing the forms and components of poetry

Ongoing Grammar Study: Adjectives, adverbs, phrases, and clauses

Writing Portfolio: Research paper

Novel: *We Are Witnesses* by Jacob Boas

Fourth Nine Weeks

Daily Oral Language, , and Journal Writing

Unit 5: Drama

Reading Skills Addressed: Studying the dramatic conventions

Analyzing a dramatic work

Ongoing Grammar Study: Prepositions, interjections, and conjunctions

Writing Portfolio: Business letter

Play: *A Comedy of Errors*

*Because our primary goal is to maximize student achievement, material may be added, deleted, and/or substituted at the teacher's discretion based on the individual needs, levels, and learning styles of each class. Creative projects, written assignments, and supplemental materials may also be included throughout the year as opportunities arise.